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REPORT TO ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION ON MEASURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL SKILLS FOR THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

1. The persistent failure of efforts to achieve a break-through in the socio-economic transformation and the sustainable development of African economies could be attributed, among other things to the lack of direction and relevance in the development and utilization of the critical skills that are required for the formulation and implementation of economic development strategies and programmes. The situation is further worsened by the abandonment of long-term development planning in favour of stop-gap and short-term economic survival and recovery measures. This abandonment of development planning has not only exacerbated the socio-economic decline which African countries have been experiencing since the early 1980s but also deprived these countries of measures to develop and build indigenous capabilities and capacity to formulate and implement sustainable development programmes. It is true that early attempts by African countries to initiate long-term development planning suffered from a member of obvious setbacks which should have been corrected through a carefully formulated strategy on critical skills development.

2. The shortcoming in the formulation of the immediate post independence development plans of African countries could be traced to the inadequate understanding of the African socio-economic environment by the economists of the day. At independence, African countries had no indigenous socio-economic planners who could formulate development plans based on African realities. Consequently African leaders enlisted the technical assistances of economists and other planners from the former colonial countries and international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (IBRD). These foreign planners apparently transplanted development theories and models with which they were familiar and used them in the formulation of the first development plans of African countries. These imported development models may have worked effectively in their original home countries but could not be expected to do the same in the unique socio-economic environment of African countries which experienced many years of colonial rule and economic exploitation. Also the consideration that when transient foreign experts formulate economic development strategies and programmes without the participation of national experts there could be distortions in implementation due, inter alia, to differences of conception and interpretation of the intended linkages of processes and goals between formulation and implementation.

3. Some development partners accuse African countries of having no confidence in the utilization of available local expertise. For instance, according to the World Bank, study titled "Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth: Long Term Perspective Study", "despite the education and training of a generation of Africans in economics, ministers of finance and planning still choose expatriates to undertake policy analysis. Many governments lack confidence in local specialists and yield to the offers of expatriates - often at little cost." Although

the World Bank acknowledges the changing attitude toward this trend in several African countries, it could be argued that the money-strings attached to foreign loans and the attitude of foreign donors, to a large extent, influence the decision on whether or not to use local experts in the formulation of development strategies and programmes. Nevertheless, African leaders must admit that this paradox on the shortage of indigenous critical skills is reinforced by the brain drain from Africa to the industrialized countries.

OUTLINE OF THE ISSUES COVERED IN THIS REPORT

4. In order to guide the discussions, the contours of the issues raised in this report are as follows:

(a) Section I deals with the importance of critical skills specifically in the context of the formulation and implementation of sustainable development strategies and programmes. A long-term perspective of the issues must be borne in mind. It is argued that the quantum of critical tasks should not only be identified but must also be dynamically linked to the development and utilization of critical skills in order to handle unexpected long-term development challenges with assiduity and confidence.

(b) Section II analyses and articulates measures for critical skills development and utilization from the perspectives of recent trends in Africa's development paradigm and implications for critical skills reorientation. Current measures to reorient critical skills development in the light of past experiences and the current development crisis are explored including a critique of some of the measures and indicative actions required to streamline critical skills development planning, education, training and utilization in the 1990s and beyond. For comprehensiveness, the issues are discussed from the perspective of the whole economy rather than from that of the dichotomy of the national economy into the private and public sectors which should, in any case, be regarded as partners in national growth and development. Both sectors require critical skills. The central government component of the public sector is, however, expected to play a pivotal role in ensuring that adequate critical skills are available for national development.

(c) Conclusions and policy implications are summarized in Section III of the report. These implications are briefly explained in terms of policy measures which could be put in place under each policy subheading. Each country is better placed, and has the prerogative, to objectively review its critical skills inventory and gaps against the background of its priorities for socio-economic transformation and sustainable development.

Nonetheless, the issues could be resolved through concerted measures at the national, subregional and regional levels if there is firm and unequivocal commitment by African governments.

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SECTION I: IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL SKILLS IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

(a) CRITICAL SKILLS INVENTORY SCENARIO

5. Knowledge of the inventory of available critical tasks, critical activities and critical skills would give an indication of gaps to be filled as well as critical skills that may be available but are at present surplus to immediate requirements because of the level of the economic development of a country. An inventory would also provide some indication of the training needs of a country in the short-term and long-term both at the national level and at the level of individual economic units such as enterprises.

(b) CRITICAL TASKS

6. The indetification of the critical tasks of short and long term development would give a clue on the categories of critical skills requirements and facilitate the planning of supply measures and actions. In this regard, the Third Meeting of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization, Khartoum 1988, arrived at a consensus on the imperatives of realigning the planning, development and utilization of human resources with the new priorities for recovery and development as well as priorities for the effective development of Africa's human resources for the immediate and long-term development. The conference focused on the following specific objectives for action:

(i) to review the status of policies, programmes and strategies for the planning, development and utilization of human resources in Africa;

(ii) to identify the major problems that have held back progress in establishing more efficient human resources planning, development and utilization systems;

(iii) to define a role for human resources to play in economic recovery programmes of African countries, and a strategy of ensuring that Africa's human resources are more involved in the process of socio-economic recovery;

(iv) to recommend measures for removing the constraints impedding the full implementation of the recommendations of APPER and UN-PAAERD in the field of human resources; and

(v) to consider proposals for improving the planning, development and utilization of human resources torwards Africa's long-term development needs.

In all the above critical objectives, there is an urgent need to restore the centrality of long-term development plans, goals and actions. Critical manpower development and utilization plans must take into consideration the long-term development challenges of African countries. Efforts should aim at reinforcing, expanding and making more relevant the human resource base, avoiding wastage through underutilization of manpower, or loss through the brain drain, and raising productivity levels, particularly in agriculture, agriculture support policies, entrepreneurship and public sector interventions.

7. Critical skills must not be perceived in a vacuum but must be closely identified with the resource base, the development aspirations of the population, the level of technology, and above all, the tasks to which the skills would be applied. In this regard, the human resources development and utilization aspects of the LPA underline the essence of scientific and technical skills and know-how for modern development. It is in this latter respect that member states are overdependent on imported technical and scientific manpower. It is therefore very cardinal and in accordance with the principle of self-reliance, that member states should give special priority to the development of scientific and technical manpower at all levels, including the training of science and technical teachers and instructors. Technical manpower would take care of the technical aspects of the formulation of development strategies and programmes.

8. The identification of critical tasks indicates also that formulation and implementation require multi-disciplinary skills in fields such as demography, sociology, economics, statistics, accountancy, management, agronomy, medicine, engineering, law, and other technical fields that oil the engine of development. The greatest challenge facing most African countries has more often than not centred on the problem of determining the quantum of critical tasks of development to guide short-term, medium and long-term human resources development planning and utilization. In skills survey exercises, the general tendency in most studies is to barely sketch the economic profile of a country and then proceed to take a skills inventory without specific identification of the tasks that should be expected to crystallize from the economic profile. This is perhaps one of the reasons why, even though there is apparent consensus, priority has hitherto not been given to measures to develop critical skills that would effectively address the problems and prospects of the formulation and implementation phases of the socio-economic planning cycle. An integrated multidisciplinary approach to development requires that the human resources development and utilization plan should be an integral part of the national development plan. Formulation and implementation measures that are based on this postulate can only be hammered out by persons who have the requisite skills for the critical tasks of development.

9. Persons with requisite skills include grassroots leaders whose ethical mettle and commitment to social development elicit the spontaneous respect of the local people; politicians who have statesmanship qualities and exemplary commitment to the advancement of the public interest and tolerance of public criticism; and academicians who have relevant education and training in development-oriented disciplines and who identify themselves with the development goals, strengths and weaknesses of poor countries, especially African countries, or the so-called Third World Countries (TWCs). All the persons mentioned here can participate in the identification of the critical tasks of development in order to facilitate the work of a small group of planners who are charged with responsibility for strategies formulation and the collation of a document which constitutes a strategic plan. This implies that the ivory tower approach to the formulation of development strategies has been haven far foreign experts in Africa and needs to be replaced by a pragmatic approach which involves a cross-section of the population and a core of indigenous experts at the apex of the strategic planning and implementation machinery.

(c) NATURE AND IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL ACTIVITIES IN IMPLEMENTATION

10. Critical activities in the implementation process invariably flow from the analysis of critical tasks. They are those activities that are indispensable for the success of development strategies and programmes. The identification of the critical activities involves the interpretation, analysis, articulation and translation of critical tasks into practical activities to attain human -centred development goals of a better life for all. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been in the forefront of tackling the critical skills problem at the basic implementation level through the experimentation, refinement and development of Modules of Employable Skills (M.E.S.) programmes for various countries. The essential consideration should focus internalization of these modules within the parametic requirements of the structural transformation of African economies.

11. The M.E.S. approach attempts to match skills with the requirements of employability in the economy; build-in flexibility to match individual needs of trainees with the changing needs of employing establishments, the economy and changes in technology; and the temporal adaptation of instructional material to the evolving skills of local instructors at basic but crucial implementation level.

12. Examples of basic critical activities at the programmes implementation level may include the following:

- applied agricultural research and agricultural extension;
- industrial development trades, especially agricultural trades; metal and mechanical trades; automotive and allied trades; electrical and electronics trades; woodworking and building trades; printing and textile trades;

- management and personal services such as financial and projects management; book-keeping; paramedical services; banking; and maintenance of utilities such as water supply, electricity, transport and communications facilities.

The matching of critical activities with critical skills requires the articulation of tasks, task elements, level of knowledge required as well as performance standards expected.

13. The critical activities in the implementation of strategies can be more involved than those in the implementation of programmes. The implementation of public policy on foreign assistance and public debt would, for instance, involve critical activities such as:

- negotiations with foreign partners on various issues (most African countries do not seem to have an impressive record in this area as evidenced by the magnitude of unproductive debts in which these countries are wallowing);
- management, especially coordination, of foreign debts and technical assistance;
- analysis of project finance, especially with applications to comparing the cost of loans; cost of borrowing foreign currency; cost of tying loans and grants; cost of implementation delays; cost of negotiations; and the matching of projects to finance and finance to projects.

SECTION II: RECENT TRENDS IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CRITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT MEASURES

(a) INADEQUATE INTEGRATION OF EMPLOYMENT-FOCUSED MEASURES IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, AND PLANS

14. African countries have had difficulties in sustaining recovery and development efforts due to several factors including the inadequate integration of employment policies and measures into the overall economic planning processes. Other factors such as the lack of collaboration and coordination between national institutions dealing with human resources planning and those dealing with productive sectors and employment promotion; the inappropriate attention paid to the development of agriculture and the informal sector; the slow progress made in the economic integration of African countries; the misplaced reliance on foreign capital and expertise for national development; and educational systems that are not attuned to the temporal realities of African economic structure, expectation levels of the people and the sophistication of international economic relations.

15. The socio-economic crisis which African countries are experiencing today reflects weaknesses in the formulation and the resulting unsatisfactory performance of the national economies at the first flush of internal and external economic shocks. African and United Nations

institutions are cognizant of these weaknesses and several initiatives are underway to overcome this persistent underdevelopment predicament.* Emphasis on the development of indigenous human resource skills and institutional capabilities should become a basic principle in the programmes of all institutions and countries that are interested in Africa's economic recovery and sustainable development.

16. The integrated sectoral development strategies and programmes approach could be described as a unity-in-diversity reorientation of sustainable development initiatives. Even though a country's economy is generally perceived as comprising the primary, the secondary and the tertiary sectors, meaningful and sustainable growth and development can only be brought about by the integration of all the sectors. This implies that measures to develop critical skills for individual activities and the characteristics of one sector must not be undertaken in isolation but must be intertwined with measures in other sectors.

17. The integrated approach in no way undermines but rather reinforces the prioritization of Africa's development paradigm. In this regard, the mid-term review of the implementation of the UN-PAAERD, 1986-1990 points out that the most important area of domestic reform in African countries is the agricultural sector on which more than 75 per cent of the population depend for their livelihood. Greater priority is being given to the channelling of resources to agriculture, improve incentives to farmers, make provision for food security and food self-sufficiency, rationalize for higher productivity in the agricultural export sector, and establish the foundation for agro-industrial opportunities.

18. The giving of first priority to agriculture and food self-sufficiency does not imply that African countries have given a back seat to industrial development. On the contrary, it is recognized that the industrial sector could, among other advantages, generate forward and backward linkages with the rest of the economy. Past experience with import substitution industries has shown that these industries were producing with imported equipments, machinery and expatriate expertise, imported raw materials and, in some cases, imported labour and fuel. In a study of six African countries, it was discovered that in some of these countries between 60 to 70 per cent of industrial materials were imported; and a dependency ratio of industry on imported'

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* See, for instance, Organization of African Unity's 1990 Economic Declaration re-affirming the letter and spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA); the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) 1986-1990; the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) 1986-1990; Africah Charter for Popular Participation in Development (Arusha, 1990); the UNDP Human Development Report, 1990 several World Bank Studies; African Employment Reports of the ILO Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA); and the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP).

materials of up to 100 per cent was common in the meat and meat products industry as well as in the petroleum refining industry.

19. An integrated analysis and formulation of an industrial development strategy and programme would have revealed that an import substitution strategy involves not only the end product such as cocacola but also equipment, machinery, raw materials and skilled workers of various categories. A carefully planned import substitution industrial strategy can be viable. With hindsight, the apparent distorted formulation of Africa's initial industrial development programmes should be attributed to technical assistance personnel from erstwhile colonial countries given that there were insignificant indigenous African planners, economists, statisticians, etc. to participate in the formulation of the first post independence development plans of newly independent African countries.

20. The latter argument may be true during the immediate post independence period but there should now be no reason why some African governments should continue to be diffident about the expertise of indigenuous specialists as bemoaned in the World Bank study on "Sub-Saharan Africa, From Crisis to Sustainable Growth: A Long-Term Perspective Study" and referred to in the introduction to this study as "the paradox of the critical skills shortage in Africa." The implication is that the development of critical skills without having confidence in them and without utilization in national development tasks and activities is just as bad as not having indigenous people with the relevant critical skills. In effect, development and utilization of the latter must go hand-in-hand if a nation's development efforts are to accomplish the desired goals and expectations of the population.

21. A workshop on "Critical Skills in Public Policy Management" concluded that African countries as recipients "must ensure that its aid negotiation and administration personnel are of the highest calibre - men and women who are adept in negotiation, patient in their study of facts and figures, at home in the analysis of complex and technical details, and capable of assessing the long-term strategic implications of aid commitments" and impeccable in personal integrity and professional conscience under the most tempting environment for graft.

22. Similarly, research, training and consultancy capabilities in all sectors of African economies are critical activities that should constitute the bedrock of a dynamic process of strategies and programmes implementation. In this regard, the issue of brain drain or skills seepage from Africa to the industrialized countries should be put in its proper perspective. The issue at stake is whether or not the brain drain of skilled people from Africa to the already industrialized countries has adverse effects on the formulation and implementation of economic strategies and programmes.

23. One argument is that the effect of brain drain on the retardation of economic development of the underdeveloped countries is less alarming than hitherto imagined. It could be argued that insofar as the out migration is due to a disequilibrium between the supply and demand of certain categories of skilled persons, it could be perceived as a symptom rather than as an important cause of the slow rate of economic growth in the losing countries. The inability of African countries to absorb or employ certain categories of skilled persons is responsible for some forms of brain drain. Thus, the level of economic development and the content of higher education must be correctly aligned both in the short-term and in the long-term perspective.

24 The education of students abroad in nuclear physics and aerodynamics before a country has reached the stage of establishing a nuclear or aircraft industry could, for instance, be a source of brain drain because the country has no self-employment nor formal sector employment opportunities for these highly specialized skills. Similarly, whereas general medical practitioners could establish private practice, highly specialized medical doctors and engineers are likely to migrate because of the inadequate absorptive capacity of their own countries. Intolerance of diverse political views and the muzzling of democracy are some of the causes of brain drain whose effect on economic development has yet to be assessed. It is, therefore, not self-evident that measures to stem the brain drain would improve the formulation and implementation of development strategies and programmes.

(b) MEASURES FOR CRITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION

25. Measures for the development and utilization of critical skills do not seem to have hastened the socio-economic recovery of African countries nor prepared the citizenry of these countries for the daunting challenges of sustainable development. The problem of shortage of indigenous skills for the specific task of formulation of development strategies and implementation of programmes is compounded by the piecemeal rationalization and reorientation of development and employment planning and the involvement of nationals in the development process. An inventory of economists, statisticians, demographers, accountants and other qualified and experienced development practitioners could yield a core pool of critical skills on which countries with deficit critical skills could draw upon in the short-term under intra-African cooperation arrangements and the integration strategy advocated by the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA).

26. There is, however, no documented evidence that the targets set in the LPA for Africa's critical skills requirements have been attained nor approached in any systematic manner. The LPA had hoped that there would be support for the OAU/ECA Co-ordinated and Administered Expanded Training and Fellowship Programme for Africa. This programme was expected to train 8,000 Africans in five years with priority to the human resources requirements of the various priority sectors and product lines, develop the teaching and research staff of regional and subregional institutions; and to evolve an African TCDC in utilizing training facilities within the region.

27. The LPA further estimated that the skill-mix ratio in the training and development of scientists, technicians and artisans should be increased to one scientist to 5 technicians to 30 craftspersons and artisans. It is difficult to assess the progress so far made in the attainment of this 1:5:30 ratio. The attainment of the latter or some other logical skills-development-mix ratio would have enabled African countries to respond appropriately to the increasing demand for more technical human resource input in production sectors, especially in respect of agriculture, social infrastructure, industry and science and technology. Plan implementation was also identified in the LPA as one of the weakest links in the development planning cycle of African countries. Maximum involvement of national technical capabilities would provide an appropriate framework for the involvement of the entire population, particularly the technical expertise and the NGOs in the entire spectrum of economic development activities.

28. At an ILO/JASPA Meeting of African Employment Planners in 1988, the emerging consensus was that although "many African countries have, since the early sixties, been involved in some sort of manpower planning, most of the approaches and emphasis have been in the wrong direction partly because of lack of clearly defined manpower policies and also partly because attempts have focused mainly on narrow concepts of manpower planning". Current measures for skills development are, in most cases, uncoordinated, piecemeal, ad hoc and incidental on issues of the implementation of development plans. The abandonment of long-term development planning and resort to economic recovery and survival programming in the 1980s have tended to create some confusion about the appropriate direction of skills development.

29. Other constraints on current measures for skills development include bottlenecks in instruments used for the identification of those whose training is likely to make significant contribution to development; inadequate labour market information system to provide data on available and foreseable critical skills; and educational systems and programmes that are not integrated with the development realities and requirements of African countries. There is also the question of increased percentages of school leavers who could spearhead the implementation of development programmes but do not have the opportunity to be selected for formal sector employment. This incongruent scenario is no doubt symptomatic of skills-development needs imbalances in the economy due to factors such as skills inadequacy in vital areas of development; skills inappropriateness due to distorted development policies; skills mismanagement; skills misallocation; and skills exfoliation. Some governments have adopted measures to correct the obvious imbalances. Thus, education and training programmes are being geared to the inculcation of knowledge and skills that could be employable in direct formal employment or self-employment in the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

30. The ongoing experience of Ghana's Programme of Economic Recovery and Development (GPERD) and similar experiences in other African countries that are implementing the IMF/World Bank-sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) further illustrate some of the innovative skills development measures that are underway in several African countries. The GPERD experience has been documented in the JASPA report titled "From Redeployment to Sustained Employment: Challenges for Ghana's Programme of Economic Recovery and Development". One of the terms of reference for the GPERD was to "review the existing vocational/skills training programmes and apprenticeship schemes and recommend measures for promoting self-employment through retraining of retrenched workers, and the adaptation of the training schemes to link skills training to self-employment and to meet the training needs of artisans in the rural and urban informal sectors". In theory and on paper the Ghana retraining and skills development programmes are praiseworthy. However, without empirical evaluation of the Ghana measures it is difficult to make conclusive statements on their success or failure.

31. Measures for the development of critical skills required for pragmatic formulation and implementation of strategies and development programmes should invariably be country specific exercises. Expertise from other nations, subregions and regions could, however, be coopted to strengthen national capabilities. It is also evident that critical skills issues and the requirements of socio-economic development tasks cut across all geopolitical regions of Africa inspite of the heterogeneity of natural resources endowments, culture, production structure, and production relations. They should, therefore, be addressed in an integrated milieu.

SUGGESTED MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE CRITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

(i) TAKING STOCK OF AFRICA'S CRITICAL SKILLS

32. Piecemeal efforts have been made now and again to compile regional directories of economists, statisticians, tax and other public administrators in Africa. These ad hoc treatment of a critical issue in Africa's socio-economic development needs to be replaced by a seriously coordinated project to prepare a compendium of up-to-date statistics and information on educated and trained Africans in various academic and professional disciplines. Each nation could undertake the inventory exercise which may be coordinated by the UNECA in collaboration with the OAU and the ILO/JASPA.

(ii) MONITORING OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS INFLOWS AND OUTFLOWS

33. As a complement to the inventory of skills in Africa there is need for each country to have detailed and up-todate information on inputs into and outputs from vocational/technical education and training institutions in the country and the country's citizens who may be studying in other countries. The educational and training system must

reflect the economic development requirements in the short and long term. A monitoring mechanism could be put in place to keep abreast of changes in the resource frontier, science and technology as well as the goals of the country's development vis-a-vis the development of critical skills.

(iii) IDENTIFICATION AND INTEGRATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS

34. The point has already been made that development tasks and activities must be integrated with all other facets of development plans. A relatively new country would start with the identification and articulation of activities (similar to job description) for which skills are required and then proceed to hammer out an education and training programme. In view of the fact that current measures for skills development are only incidently based on the occupational requirements of most African economies, the measures suggested here and at (i) and (ii) could be pursued simultaneously for cost effectiveness.

35. The integration of intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral development activities could be undertaken to avoid fragmentation and the leakages of scarce resources through unhealthy duplication of activities and management processes. Thus, agricultural activities must be integrated within the agricultural sector and backward and forward linkages established between an already integrated industrial sector and the agricultural sector. Skills development measures must similarly be integrated in the national development plan.

(iv) APPROPRIATENESS OF TRAINEES/PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR CRITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

36. Indications are that most African countries are in a position to constitute a core of indigenous citizens with the requisite expertise to formulate development strategies in diverse areas of the economy especially in agriculture, rural and urban development, health care, sanitation, water supply, roads and other transport insfrastructure, design of educational and training programmes specific to the country's development needs, population and employment generation programmes, etc. The identification and selection of participants specifically for training programmes in strategy formulation, if done objectively and not based on kinship or other unethical criteria, could pay dividends in the form of pragmatic strategic plans for national development. The inclusion of grassroots community leaders would provide indelible inputs to reflect the realities of each locality of the country. This would enhance the implementation process. A country could make up any deficits in national skills through cooperation arrangements with other African or foreign countries while its nationals are undergoing the required training or acquiring necessary experience.

(v) INTEGRATION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SECTOR WITH THE ECONOMY

37. The integration of primary, post-primary, university, non-formal education and vocational training should aim at preparing the population for productive and useful lives rather than imparting knowledge and skills that are inappropriate to the development programmes of a country. In this regard, the analysis and articulation of the development tasks and activities would give direction to the short and long-term planning of the education and training sector.

38. The idea of a university as the citadel of knowledge should be interpreted in its proper context. Whereas it is tenable to insulate the university and other national training institutions from party politics, there is no justification whatsoever for not rooting the academic, research and consultancy programmes of African universities in the socio-economic development demands of the society. University staff and students ought to identify their work more closely with the formulation and implementation of development strategies and programmes. There is, therefore, need for all African countries to hammer out an effective two-way mechanism for the interaction of university personnel and government institutions that are responsible for sectoral and macro-level development planning and implementation.

39. Similarly, vocational and other technical/professional schools should be integrated with peasant farmers, commercial farmers, agro-industries, manufacturing enterprises, utility undertakings, transport and communications concerns and other infrastructural services that are the bedrock of development programmes. The LPA proposal of one scientist to 5 technicians to 30 craftsmen and artisans skills - mix ratio is indicative of the importance of technicians and artisans in the servicing of the infrastructure of development.

(vi) ESTABLISHING, OPERATING AND DYNAMIZATION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES

40. Practically all African countries have training institutions devoted to the training of nationals in one or more aspects of development-related disciplines. There are also subregional and regional institutions. The establishment of relevant institutions can help African countries collectively to develop the capabilities and infrastructure essential for economic and social development. This preoccupation of the OAU/ECA resulted in the ECA establishment of institutions such as the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP); and the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD). Other relevant development management training institutions include the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI); and the Mano River Union Training and Research Board for the planning, coordination and harmonization of middle-level "manpower" technical and vocational training programmes in the critical areas of customs, excise and trade statistics; telecommunications and postal services; forest rangers and forestry management and maritime training.

41 The point is that, in terms of physical structures, there is no shortage of development management training institutions to cater for the critical skills development needs of African countries. The effective functioning of institutions is more important than their elegance or proliferation. As pointed out in the LPA, "the various institutions that have been established at the instance and request of African governments, in fields such as natural resources, science and technology, industry. transport and communications, training and human resources" have all suffered from the ill-effects of lack of follow-up in the translation of political decisions into practical action. Adequate financial and material support has not been forthcoming. There is need to implement the guidelines proposed in the LPA to ensure the viability of existing institutions rather than establish brand new institutions that may not take-off the ground because of under-funding and under utilization of capacity.

42. Training programmes in the various institutions must be updated and dynamized periodically in keeping with changes in the economic environment, science, technology and the economic policy reorientation of African governments and their development partners. Dynamization of curricula, training methods and policies would strengthen the capacity to absorb economic shocks and enhance the success of development programmes under the uncertainties of internal and external socio-economic variables.

(vii) ON-THE-JOB TRAINING FOR CRITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

43. The acquisition of academic qualifications does not automatically confer lessons of practical applications of knowledge onto the academic certificate holder nor would the holder acquire experience without the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired in a practical environment. On-the-job training or learning-by-doing could be adapted as one of the measures to advance skills development in critical areas of the economy. The LPA proposed several measures to transfer skills through on-the-job training. These measures include the design of programmes for the development of technical entrepreneurship; training in technical fields such as production engineering; industrial design; chemical engineering; metallurgy; project preparation and evaluation; training of women to enter science and technology activities; and adult skills and literacy campaigns in science and technology to impart not only skills that are useful for the implementation of development programmes but also to rid the society of anti-development superstitions and unhealthy cultural practices. African countries could thus encourage the promotion of on-the-job training not only at the implementation levels but also at the development formulation levels in the ministries of development planning and other government institutions.

(viii) TAPPING THE RESOURCES OF ILO/JOBS AND SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR AFRICA (JASPA), AND OTHER UN AGENCIES AND DONORS

44. The JASPA as Africa's regional component of the International Labour Organization's World Employment Programme has been active since

1974. However, it was only in 1985 that a Steering Group Meeting agreed that JASPA should shift the emphasis of its activities more in favour of "project and programme formulation especially in the fields of employment and manpower planning, employment promotion in the urban and informal sector, rural employment promotion in non-farm activities and employment promotion for youth and women".

45. JASPA activities fall broadly into four categories consisting of technical cooperation with African countries, cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa; seminars, workshops, meetings and training programmes; and research and publication. In essence, JASPA could collaborate in the implementation of the theme of this study at the national, subregional and regional levels. At this point in time, it is not self-evident that the JASPA has undertaken and published a report specifically on "measures for the development of critical skills for the formulation and implementation of economic development strategies and programmes" in Africa. It should be possible to include Skills Development Profiles (SDP) of African countries in the African Employment Report which the JASPA introduced in 1988.

46. The task of preparing the groundwork and undertaking comprehensive measures for the development of critical skills is enormous and highly involved to be left to the already meagre resources of individual African countries even though primary responsibility for the exercise rests with the government and the people of these countries. The problem is compounded by the persistently weak statistical base of almost all African countries vis-a-vis the daunting statistical requirements for decision-making to speed up economic recovery and development. In the circumstances, African countries ought to enlist the technical and material assistance of their development partners especially the UNDP, ECA, ILO/JASPA and other UN agencies and institutions, EEC, Commonwealth and other bilateral donors under TCDC arrangements.

(ix) OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER FOR POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

47. One of the objectives of the 1990 Arusha Conference which resulted in the adoption of the African development charter was to "identify obstacles to people's participation in development and define appropriate approaches to the promotion of popular participation in policy formulation, planning, implementation monitoring and evaluation of development programmes". The availability and utilization of critical skills need to be matched with critical strategies, programmes and development activities. This matching process will be more realistic and effective if there are opportunities and the conducive political climate for every person in society to participate in the planning and in the implementation of development programmes at both the national and the regional levels. A regional approach to measures for critical skills development in the context of development strategies and programmes formulation and implementation would pool together data

on regional skills inventory and provide a clue to the future course of action in critical skills development.

48. In the final analysis, political leaders and Africa's development partners should have confidence in the expertise of educated and trained Africans who should be involved at all stages of development plans formulation and implementation. The educated and trained Africans must identify themselves more closely with the grass-roots development needs of the African people. The pragmatic implementation of the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development would encourage people from all walks of life to come up with innovative ideas on critical skills development.

SECTION III CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Conclusions

49. Formulation and implementation of economic development strategies and programmes in Africa are in a state of flux because of several factors including:

(a) the excessive dependence on inexperienced foreign experts whose empirical knowledge of Africa is minimal;

(b) the marginalization of Africa's critical skills and capacity development efforts;

(c) the inadequacies of initial internal socio-economic policies and persistent mismanagement of resources;

(d) inability of African economies to contain externally generated economic shocks;

(e) natural factors such as drought and epidemics; man-made armed conflicts which gulp scarce foreign exchange and disrupt implementation of development programmes; and the vicissitudes of the international economic environment which has generally been hostile to Africa's long-term sustainable development goals and aspirations.

50. It is also untenable to argue that, after about three decades of independence, African countries do not have the critical skills to formulate and implement long-term economic development strategies and programmes. The fact is that African countries seem to have abdicated their responsibilities for the formulation and implementation of their own economic development strategies and programmes. This syndrome of relying on outside skills, in particular the morbid conditionalities of donor agencies, to take the lead in the definition of African development policies and strategies has not enhanced the harnessing of available critical skills and the building of skills capacity to satisfy the challenges of sustainable development with transformation in the 1990s and beyond.

51. The preparedness and response of African countries to efforts to coordinate efforts on the development of critical human resources has todate been disappointing. As reported, for instance, in the Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization and its Subsidiary Organs, only six member States responded to questionnaires initiated by the ECA and OAU in an attempt to effectively coordinate the development of quality human resources for Africa. There is urgent need for change of attitude toward the translation of public declarations on critical skills into concrete action. As emphasised in the LPA, public pronouncements at meetings must be translated into national action programmes to ensure that project activities related to human resource development and utilization are incorporated in and reflected in national policy guidelines, related legislation and development plans.

Policy Implications and Action

52. The pursuance of new orientation of development strategies and new priorities for socio-economic recovery, transformation, sustained and sustainable development calls for urgent policy action by those responsible for the planning, development and utilization of human resources to define and articulate critical skills priorities within the framework of the new alternative development strategies for African countries. The policy implications and action with regard to measures for the development of critical skills should focus on the following:

(a) Integration of critical skills with national development planning through the restructuring of national institutional machinery;

(b) Building dialogue and operational bridges between policy-makers in government, industry and commerce, and, African Universities, Research and Consultancy Institutions;

(c) Critical skills utilization and the internalization of development;

(d) Regional co-operation and skills development and utilization: stemming the brain-drain syndrome;

(e) Creation of an enabling environment for critical skills development and utilization.

Each of the above policy implications issue is briefly articulated in the following paragraphs.

(a) INTEGRATION OF CRITICAL SKILLS PLANNING WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING THROUGH RESTRUCTURING OF INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY

53. The integration of human resources planning and programming functions, personnel development, placement and utilization services with all sectors of the economy is long overdue. In this regard, it is suggested that rather than have separate Ministries, as is thecase in some African countries, there should be one Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, which Ministry would be in a better position to liaise with a Ministry of Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization. This would ensure that established critical skills priorities are in consonance with the long-term development plans of the nation.

(b) BUILDING DIALOGUE AND BRIDGES BETWEEN POLICY-MAKERS IN GOVERNMENT AND AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY INSTITUTIONS

54. African institutions of higher learning, research and consultancy must establish operational links with policy-makers in government, commerce and industry. The academic community should take the initiative to bring policy-makers into the core of research, training and consultancy activities. Universities must be in the forefront instead of taking a back-seat in the drive to transform and develop the economies of African countries. They shoud not throw up their hands in despair. African academic communities must reflect the development aspirations of their societies. They must intensify relevant scientific and technological research in order to make meaningful contribution to African development alternatives. Academic programmes must be reoriented to focus on the production of quality rather than quantity graduates.

55. African academicians and intellectuals must find ways and means of influencing policy-making especially on their countries' development strategies and programmes. They must organize themselves in research and study teams and help unravel the social, political, economic and cultural ramifications of the development dilemma in which African countries find themselves today.

56. There should be a mechanism established for continuous dialogue between policy-makers across the whole spectrum of the national economy. In the sam vein, cooperation among African Universities as well as research and consultancy institutes should be instrumental in the cross-fertilization of skills, knowledge and technologies in the interest of national socio-economic transformation and development. For academic institutions to make effective contribution to policy dialogue, they must venture into non-traditional fields of expertise, including curricula in entrepreneurship development, production management, exploration and evaluation of mineral resources, and build up the capacity to endogeneously produce farm equipment and machinery, spare parts, implements and other capital goods that are at present imported at great costs.

CRITICAL SKILLS UTILIZATION AND THE INTERNALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

57. African governments have a tendency to proceed with their development policies, strategies, programmes and activities as if they are compelled to borrow bits and pieces of development models, systems and practices from the already industrialized world without regard to the specificity and the uniqueness of the African resource endowments and socio-economic milieu. This transplanting of alien development models has led to the dissipation of Africa's scarce resources. It must be realized that critical skills and technological aspects of development cannot and should not be divorced from the socio-cultural and the socio-political environment of development. Critical skills development must, therefore aim not only at imparting knowledge and skills but also at imbuing all development cadres, academicians, and policy-makers with the mental attitudes which are conducive and amenable to the internalization of appropriate and pertinent development strategies and programmes. This internalization of policy would lessen the over-dependence on foreign development strategies and expertise.

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION: STEMMING THE BRAIN-DRAIN SYNDROME

58. It is very disheartening to know that whereas in the 1980s more than 100,000 qualified Africans emigrated to the industrialized countries, there are no less than 80,000 technical assistance expatriates on donor-sponsored projects in various African countries. How can this brain-drain scenario be justified? As far back as April 1980, the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning and Utilization was charged with responsibility to serve as the nerve centre and regional forum for effective human resources harmonization and programme co-ordination. The responsibilities included, among other things, the following:

(a) the planning and programming of strategies for ensuring the capability of human resources as product agents and determinants of national wealth and personal welfare;

(b) the creation of knowledge, skills and motivational properties of human resources to ensure usability and involvement in socio-economic development;

(c) promotion and nurturing of human resources quality enhancement factors such as physical and mental health, food and nutrition, housing and basic human needs fulfilment; and

(d) planning distributive allocation and productivity as well as effecting the placement of human resources for productive use and creation of sustainable productivity.

59. The Conference of Ministers was mandated to make proposals for the periodic review and realignment of various manpower systems, programmes, policies, objectives and strategies towards a common target

of desired high quality human resources individually and collectively as required for the productive use and promotion of regional productivity by Member States. The latter were also to be provided with policy and programme guidelines on human resources development for adaptation to national needs. If this regional programme on human resources planning, development and utilization had been implemented as conceived and elaborated, the problem of the brain-drain syndrome would have been less serious than it is today.

60. Similarly, the LPA recommendations and exhortations have largely gone by unheeded. Notwithstanding the LPA encouragement on regional cooperation and collective self-reliance in manpower resources through, among other things, the adoptation of employment policies that permit free movement of labour within subregions to facilitate employment of surplus of trained and skilled manpower of one country in another country in other Member States lacking in the requisite skills, African countries have the tendency to prefer expatriates from non-African countries, even if the expatriates are of doubtful professional competence. This preference has led to the World Bank observation that African leaders have no confidence in the expertise of their nationals although the real reason could be traced to financial packages and strings that come with technical assistance personnel. If this is the case, then African leaders should have the guts to say so instead of casting unrealistic doubts on the skills and competence of their own nationals.

61. Co-operation and collective self-reliance in manpower development can also be effective if African States pool their resources to develop and operate training, research and consultancy institutions in support of the critical manpower requirements of priority development sectors and strategies. Exchange programmes, use of physical facilities, and exchange of information on national training and research facilities and scholarships available for the nationals of other African countries would enhance the realization of the development goals of regional cooperation, especially in critical skills development.

AN ENABLING FOR CRITICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION

62. Unless the socio-political environment is conducive, all that we have advocated so far would come to nought. It is true that the international economic environment has been, to a large extent, unfriendly to the economic development endeavours of African countries. Nonetheless, this apparent hostility should not be allowed to become the scapegoat for the socio-economic malaise in which most African countries find themselves today. Critical skills development, and especially utilization, cannot be divorced from the political milieu of development. African countries must come to grips with the political impediments to critical skills development and utilization. The African

Charter for Social Action and the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development provide guidelines for the creation of the enabling environment for the full participation of all human resources in the formulation and implementation of strategies and programmes for sustainable development with transformation within the framework of the African Development Alternative. African governments must make unequivocal commitment to the speedy planning, development and utilization of indigenous critical skills in their national, subregional, and regional development plans.